

## PREFACE

The idea for the *New Hampshire Future Planning Guide* came from many individuals: consumers, parents, professionals, and community members. While other guides are available to assist with future planning, none were specific to New Hampshire's laws and services for people with disabilities and those who support them.

This *Guide* is divided into two volumes. *Volume I: Life Planning for a person with a Disability* will help you develop a *life plan* and a *letter of intent*. They can be used to share information, dreams, and aspirations for a person with a disability. While not a legal document, the *letter of intent* can accompany legal documents such as a will or a trust, and communicates important information about the person. Developing a *life plan* or *letter of intent* sounds easy but many details can be overlooked without tools and lists to refer to. This *Guide* provides you with the tools and lists to aid with planning.

*Volume 2: Legal & Financial Planning for a Person with a Disability* offers legal and financial information to assist you with legal and financial planning. It explains why planning is so important and provides valuable information about guardianships, public benefits considerations, special-needs trusts, and health care coverage. While not a replacement for the services of a financial planner or attorney, it will assist you to develop the proper legal and financial planning to support the vision outlined in your life plan.

The *Guide* has been designed to use in a variety of situations and at any point in the person's life. Younger parents, extended family members, aging caregivers, professionals and others providing support, will discover that the information included in the *Guide* is helpful when developing a future plan.

You don't need to use the entire *Guide*. Choose the most appropriate sections for your situation. The *Guide* is a *do it yourself* tool, but may be completed with the guidance of a trained facilitator or service provider. It can also serve as a discussion tool for meetings or for reviewing and outlining important information prior to seeing an attorney or financial planner.

A future plan changes as your situation changes. Its content should be reviewed each year to make sure the information remains current. Federal and state laws and regulations do change. The services and supports available to people with disabilities fluctuate and situations change. Because of this, a future plan should be reviewed and updated at least annually.

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